

## Why the Nudity Taboo is Unethical and Must Go

Written by Guy Purcella  
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I have always believed in the fundamental right to be naked. Outside of protection from the elements, from cold and physical hazards like thorns and broken beer bottles, clothing is entirely unnecessary, a matter of custom, of adornment, nothing more. I see no reason to wear clothes at home, at the pool, on the beach or at the park. Wherever bathing suits are acceptable, nudity should be also. Clothing has nothing to do with morality. Anyone who believes that society cannot function should people expose their genitals has only to look at the [Bororo, Pataxo, and Xerente tribes of the Amazon](#), where complete nudity is customary. Going natural was practiced in Ancient Sparta, among Celtic tribes, and remains a common form of recreation for many Americans. Just visit

[NudeState](#)

. The image collection of families and friends sharing “naked time” together is simply beautiful. This is why it breaks my heart to hear about Christian Adamek:

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□ □ □ □ *“Christian Adamek, from Huntsville, Alabama, hanged himself on October 2, a week after he was arrested for running naked across the Sparkman High football field during a game. The teenager died two days later from his injuries and on Wednesday, friends and family gathered at a memorial service as they struggled to comprehend the beloved student’s death. A video of Adamek streaking during a game against a rival team was posted on YouTube hours after the event and students took to Twitter to call him a ‘legend.’ ‘Sparkman’s new slogan is gonna be “Welcome to Sparkman High School, Home of Christian Adamek,”” one student wrote. But school staff did not treat the situation so lightly. □ Sparkman High Principal Michael Campbell told WHNT a day before the suicide attempt that the teen could face major repercussions because of his actions. ‘There’s the legal complications,’ Campbell said. ‘Public lewdness and court consequences outside of school with the legal system, as well as the school consequences that the school system has set up.’ In Alabama, indecent exposure is linked to the state’s sex offender laws, meaning that he could have found himself on the sex offenders register due to the streaking. □ Campbell added that that the incident was not just a prank and needed to be treated seriously. Sparkman High administrators even recommended that Adamek face a hearing in the Madison County court system to determine if formal charges would be filed, WHNT reported. □ Adamek had also been disciplined by the school district but the details had not been made public.*

*The day before the suicide attempt, the principal had confirmed that Adamek was not at school and the teenager’s sister suggested on Twitter that Adamek faced expulsion, AL.com reported. Campbell declined to comment on Adamek’s death but the Madison County school district issued a statement saying it had ‘received word that a Sparkman High School student has passed away.’ ‘Our prayers and thoughts are with the family during this time of bereavement,’ the statement read. The messages on Twitter have now turned from congratulatory to somber. ‘Praying for the Adamek family. Christian was so funny and nice. He will be missed by so many,’ one girl wrote. □ ‘He was one that brightened the room when he walked in. That’s what I’ll always remember about Christian.’” —” [Boy, 15, kills himself after ‘facing expulsion and being](#)*

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[put on sex offender registry' for streaking prank at high school football game](#)  
" by Lydia Warren, *The Daily Mail*

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I would never go so far as to suggest that the reason for Adamek's suicide was the shame of nudity, or even the extreme punishment he was threatened with, placement on the Sex Offender Registry List, where he would forever be associated with the worst of sexual deviants. More than likely, Adamek suffered from some form of depression. One does not choose suicide on a whim. But I do believe his streaking was a way for him to cope. I often find nudity to be cathartic and more than once have contemplated freeing my body about the neighborhood. Perhaps Adamek felt the need to draw attention to his existence. Whatever the case may be, his actions should have been celebrated. Incriminating him could only have damaged his already fragile psyche, and this is the shame of this story, the intolerance of those who cling to outdated and meaningless taboos. If we continue to treat people who choose body freedom like rapists and child molesters, we pervert the very meaning of what it is to be a sex offender, and by association, belittle the evils of rape and molestation. People who commit sex crimes cause lasting psychological wounds. Nobody who sees a human body has ever been harmed by it.

Anti-nudity laws are unethical in that they criminalize a state of being. There is no precedent, no comparable law, and worse, no rationale for it. It is entirely rooted in archaic religious traditions. But while we no longer justify beating our wives or stoning adulterers, we must also accept that the human body is not an object of sin, nor can it be considered lewd, indecent or obscene. Unlike public sex or masturbation, nakedness is not an act, and for children innocent to sex, does not arouse. While some people unused to what humans look like may feel awkward, the feeling stems not from some fundamental aspect of nature, but a society that teaches children that their bodies are something to hide, which can often have devastating consequences. When I was twelve, I needed surgery around my "private" parts, but what had been so very private went on display for nurses, doctors, surgeons and family members. At the time, I felt violated, but realizing it had to be done for my health, my rage turned toward society. If raised among the Bororo, Pataxo or Xerente people, or as my great Spartan ancestors were, I would have never felt violated (although I probably wouldn't have had the surgery either!).

The only case anyone can make against social nudity is that it is offensive. While this may be the case for some people, and honestly I cannot imagine how something so common to us all can be, it is irrelevant when it comes to what is legal. At the risk of sounding like a Fox News pundit, the First Amendment guarantees Americans freedom of expression. No matter how offended I am (and often am) by people driving around with giant Confederate flags on the back of their trucks, I know that it is their right to do so, and that it would be unethical of me to criminalize their expression, however racist and hurtful it may be. I can legally burn a Bible, a Koran, even an American flag. I can hold a sign at a gay man's funeral that reads, "God Hates Fags"; I can tattoo myself with a swastika and wear a T-shirt with Hitler's face on it; and I can put a bumper sticker on my car comparing the president to a terrorist. And yet, the one thing I

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am never free to express is that of my humanity, my belief that the body is an inherent good and innocent thing, and that the only real shame is to hide it, or to fear that some neighbor might peer over a fence and be offended by it. I have only to take one step beyond my front door, and should I feel the sun on my surgical scar, I become a criminal. For the remainder of my life, I am barred from schools and playgrounds and anywhere children gather. In essence, I am treated worse than a Nazi, because a penis is a greater offence than a swastika. This is what Christian Adamek was faced with. No doubt, he was hurting inside, more than his friends and family could imagine, and our society failed him. A society that treats streakers as criminals, that bases a legal system upon outdated religious taboos, fails us all.

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